

ANNUAL LAW REVIEW

Vol. I, No. 1

December, 1948

FOREWORD

by

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It is a mere couple of months since the School of Law in the University of Western Australia came of age; now in the enthusiasm of early maturity it has planned the publication of an Annual Law Review of a type and on a scale not hitherto attempted in any Australian University.

One may well applaud the attempt itself; but a perusal of the contents of and list of contributors to this first number requires a recognition of an admirable performance, one which should earn adequate and continued support from the legal profession and others interested in public affairs.

Law has too long been regarded as having a sort of unalterable quality derived from the Medes and Persians, the Twelve Tables, and such sources. But as our societies change and new conditions emerge, so must also our concepts of legal rights and wrongs, duties and penalties, vary. Our law is always in a developmental stage, and apart from the lessening field of judicial interpretation of statute and custom its restatement and amendment are largely left to parliamentary action.

It is too much to-day to expect statutory recognition, prompt and adequate, by legislatures almost exclusively preoccupied with economic questions. It is necessary to have a considerable body of informed opinion to show the needs and point the way; and the creation of such a body depends in turn on an explanation and understanding of our institutions, an exposition of the underlying principles of our laws and customs, an examination of their moral sources, a comparison with other legal systems, a criticism of applications and interpretations that may appear to be dubious. There is no better mode of achieving such ends than a Review devoted to such purposes, and this first number is a satisfactory step in the right direction.

In commending it to readers and subscribers, I offer congratulations to Professor F. R. Beasley, Dean of the Faculty, and to his staff and contributors for a fine effort, and wish them continued success in their high endeavour.